

SUNDAY HARBOUR LABOUR.

W. HENDERSON, Auditor.
Hempstead, July 21st, 1861.

THE CHINA BORNEO COMPANY, LIMITED.

The adjourned extraordinary general meeting of the shareholders of the above Company was held at the offices of the General Managers, Messrs. Gibb, Livingston & Co., on the 23rd inst. Mr. B. Layton presided, and there were present:—Messrs. C. S. Sharr, H. L. Dalrymple, J. Wheeler, A. P. Stokes (director) W. Judd, G. Fenwick, H. Wickham, E. A. Solomon, J. B. Gomes, G. S. Coxon, W. Farlane, A. G. Stokes, J. S. Perry, &c.

The Chairman briefly stated that the meeting was held for the further discussion of the accounts. He understood from the Company's solicitor that the passing of the accounts would have no effect or bearing upon the question of proceeding against Mr. Abrahamson.

Mr. Wickham—Since the meeting I have taken the opportunity of carefully reading Mr. Abrahamson's defence, and I think that anything more weak or deserving of contempt it would be difficult to imagine. He has the honesty to state that there are assets put down in the books that never existed, and that part, there is no difficulty in believing. Unfortunately for us, in another part of his defence he does his best to throw the responsibility on the juniors—the underwriters, which I think is not practicable, because Mr. Allard seems to have a very good defence—he says, in effect, that no-one knew better than Mr. Abrahamson himself that the wood was not worth more than a cent a foot. Knowing this (Mr. Abrahamson has got his returns from the jungle) he has the audacity to put it down in the accounts of 30 cents a foot. Everything seems to me, from the beginning to the end in connection with this Company, to have been done with a view to deceiving us, and, I believe, with a view to inflating the shares and enabling Mr. Abrahamson to get out.

The Chairman—I don't think that.

Mr. Wickham—I am sure of it.

Mr. Fenwick—He has tried to tell his shares.

Mr. Wickham—He tried to tell them—he even tried to get up a verdict, but the men he went to soon gave him to understand that he had come to the wrong quarter.

The Chairman—I don't think you are quite right.

Mr. Wickham rejoined that Mr. Gomes had been invited to a private syndicate meeting by Mr. Abrahamson.

Mr. Gomes—No, that was in reference to another Company.

Mr. Wickham—There is another matter in connection with this Company on which we ought to have some information, I think, from our solicitors. At the time of the sale of the business of Messrs. Abrahamson and Co. to this Company, for the sum of \$100,000, Mr. Stokes was a partner with Mr. Abrahamson, and was interested in the transaction. I think that, as our solicitor, it was his duty to have protected our interests, and I don't see how he could do so when he was virtually acting for himself. Knowing the position of affairs I think the asking of such a sum was not what we had a right to expect, and there has nothing transpired since to justify it. Therefore I think it is desirable that Mr. Stokes should give us an explanation with regard to his action in the matter—it has not been alluded to before because it was only found out by the Committee of Investigation, when Mr. Stokes was in England. But I think it was most improper, because with his own interests at stake—and human nature is human nature all over the world—he could not act with the same impartiality as if he was acting without any such interest. It is no use dealing with Mr. Abrahamson more than we have—we shall get no satisfaction out of him, and his conduct from first to last has been virtually beneath contempt.

Mr. Stokes—With regard to what you have said I am very glad you have given me this opportunity of explaining. I think Mr. Wickham is in error in saying that he had no opportunity of bringing this to the notice of the shareholders before.

Mr. Wickham—I could not, in your absence.

Mr. Stokes—When I was in England I read the account of what took place at the last general meeting, and I then saw a reference to my action in this matter, and as I am acting as vendor as well as solicitor, and I am glad of the opportunity of setting that right. In regard to what Mr. Wickham says I should like to point out that when the prospectus of this Company was issued the fullest information was given to the shareholders and all intending to subscribe, as to my relation to the firm of Abrahamson and Co.—it was set out in detail who composed the firm, and my name was included. So no-one can complain of any want of candour on my part. With regard to the point Mr. Wickham makes, that I could not act properly for the two interests, I may remind you that it is the usual thing, when the purchase and sale of a Company are effected, for one solicitor to act for both parties; it is quite the exception when that is not the case.

Mr. Wickham—If a solicitor is concerned? I know of exceptions to that rule, most decidedly.

Mr. Stokes—I wish to point out that my connection with the firm of Abrahamson & Co. was fully disclosed. With regard to what I did as your solicitor, I may state that I was not in any way concerned in the negotiations. I only prepared the transfers and other documents such as the Articles. And in doing that, I submit, no-one can complain that the work was not performed fairly towards both parties.

Mr. Wickham—What I complain of is the sanctioning of the payment of \$100,000 for a business with which you were familiar.

Mr. Stokes—I had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Wickham—Did you receive your portion of the money?

Mr. Stokes—Yes.

Mr. Wickham—I want it explained how you filed on \$100,000.

Mr. Stokes—The negotiations were not conducted by the sleeping partners.

Mr. Wickham—But they were consulted.

Mr. Stokes—Certainly, but they relied on Mr. Abrahamson.

The Chairman—I think this is straying from the subject.

Mr. Stokes—I should like a good opportunity to explain. The sleeping partners put in funds as an investment—they had no knowledge of the details—the whole responsibility rested with Mr. Abrahamson, who was the only person that could give details. The Sandakan law provides for such partnerships and the employment of capital belonging to sleeping partners. Only Mr. Abrahamson could have any knowledge of the fact that this Company was not getting good value for its money—the point that is that I took the whole of my interest in shares, and at the present time I hold a larger number than I did then; I regret to say I purchased a considerable number as late as October 1889, and when I left this Colony I fully believed it was a good investment. I regret still more that I did not, as I unfortunately induced several of my friends to invest at the same time. I think my explanation is clear.

Mr. Wickham—I cannot understand.

The Chairman thought the matter irrelevant.

Mr. Wickham—I think this is properly preliminary to the winding-up of the Company which we are here to consider.

The Chairman—We should pass the accounts and then consider the Company's future.

Mr. Wickham—I think there is a strong objection to passing the accounts, from what I hear.

The Chairman pointed out that it was necessary.

Mr. Gomes—If we pass them we lose the right to prosecute Mr. Abrahamson, don't we?

The Chairman read the legal opinion on the subject, mentioned in his opening remarks, to show that they would still have that right.

Mr. Wickham—Then I see no objection to passing the accounts. Expressions of opinion were made to me to-day that we had better not pass them, but I believe it was purely for fear that we could not then take proceedings against Mr. Abrahamson if we wished.

The Chairman rejoined that the meeting had not been held in April, but the accounts had been behind-hand.

Mr. Parlane said that at one of the meetings—the last annual general meeting—Mr. Francis spoke on the subject, and gave his opinion, which he thought was antagonistic to the one now put forward by the directors.

The Chairman referred to the report of the meeting and read what Mr. Francis had said. There had been a discussion as to passing the accounts before the adjournment of the meeting; some were in favour of passing them, and some against. Mr. Wickham proposed an adjournment to allow the committee of inquiry to consult with the directors. Mr. Francis said that, though in Mr. Wickham's remarks there was no want of trust in the management, yet the accounts were not sufficiently clear; but the strongest reason against adopting them was that when the meeting had adopted them they would thereby become the accepted opinions of the shareholders. But the Chairman continued, that opinion did not quite apply to this matter. The legal advisers of the Company said now that passing the accounts would not commit the shareholders to anything. But he did not press it if the meeting preferred a further postponement.

Mr. Fenwick pointed out that in the accounts presented the stock of timber in Borneo was valued at about \$4,000. Was timber lying in the forest put down at ten cents or thirty cents a foot?

The Chairman supposed it meant all the timber that was set-at-ask, not still in the jungle. It was all saleable timber.

Mr. Parlane asked the Chairman if he could explain the serious depreciation of the timber in Hongkong.

The Chairman replied that the matter had been dealt with by the committee of inquiry, and was given in their report.

Mr. Wickham mentioned the complaints about the large quantity of wood sent to Hongkong in bad condition. But one cut of wood could not be overlooked. Mr. Abrahamson spoke of large quantities of ironwood being lost to the Company because it had been left so long lying on the ground rotting, though only cut a year ago. Now, it was supposed to be a wood that lasted for centuries, and practically impervious. He wondered if all this ironwood ever existed—he thought it was a billiard though put down as ironwood. It had only been cut a year or two ago, and now Mr. Abrahamson said it was so rotten that it was not worth bringing down. It was a very great pity he was not here to exclaim.

Mr. Fenwick asked who it was that valued the stock when the Company took over the business and goodwill from Abrahamson & Co. for \$100,000. Was it the general manager or the promoters?

The Chairman said that at that time there was no general manager, but the valuation was made by a Mr. Flint, now dead, but then employed by the Government at Sandakan. Mr. Abrahamson got him to do it; he was an independent authority.

Were the promoters acquainted with Mr. Flint, or only Mr. Abrahamson?—It was agreed to accept his valuation.

The Chairman, in the course of discussion gave details of the stock existing to the value of \$4,368, which he understood was all good merchantable wood, lying at various points, and valued respectively at 3, 7, 10, 12, up to 25 cents per foot.

Mr. Gomes pointed out that at 30 cents, as Mr. Abrahamson had put it, there should have been a profit. The coolets were paid fixed wages, and that should have been set off as cost, on the debit side; but there was no profit shown in his account.

Mr. Wickham—Because what he has been putting down at 30 cents was really timber still in the jungle, worth not more than 10.

Mr. Gomes—I should certainly think Abrahamson should be prosecuted by the directors.

The Chairman said they might sue him, and try to recover some of their money from him; but this was not the time to speak of that. At present the accounts were under discussion.

Mr. Fenwick agreed that it was perfectly certain that this could be done after the accounts had been passed. They should try and get their money back.

Mr. Gomes said that he believed Mr. Stokes had all the directors had been deceived by Abrahamson from the first. He was quite surprised at the amount of confidence they had placed in him.

Mr. Wickham—Everybody did who heard him speak.

The Chairman said many people had trusted him. Mr. Gomes himself had the same conviction.

Mr. Gomes—But after two or three interviews I lost it again.

On the motion of Mr. Wickham, seconded by Mr. Gomes, the accounts were passed.

Mr. Wickham said that it was proposed after this to hold a private meeting to consider matters connected with the winding up of the Company.

The Chairman did not mind whether the meeting be private or not. The only thing he wanted was an expression of opinion from the shareholders to show whether it was likely that the Company would be closed, because in that case according to the Articles of Association it would be necessary to call an extraordinary public meeting, of which a fortnight's notice was necessary, to pass any resolution for winding up or taking any steps towards selling the property.

Mr. Gomes suggested that the change in the management might enable the business to go on.

Mr. Wickham said that it was not possible to get men with a good practical experience to go to the place and do the work properly. Too much money had been sunk already, and it was better to wind up.

The Chairman said he had great confidence in the present management.

Mr. Wickham said the men could be trusted, but he did not think they had experience of the business.

Mr. Gomes—It is not experience we need, it is honesty.

Most of those present agreed that it was honesty that was wanted.

Mr. Fenwick said the Company had lost money through useless steamers. The *Sandakan*

was which was running to Haiphong, never could make money. He had always said she was a useless craft. The *Taraposa* was too small for the trade, and never could pay. The saw-mill here was the same—it would never pay. The saw-mill in Borneo never paid. He proposed that the meeting express itself in favour of calling a private meeting to discuss the winding up of the Company.

Mr. Wickham seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mr. Fenwick asked if the directors had expressed any opinion on the question.

The Chairman said that a long time ago they were in favour of winding up.

The public meeting then terminated.

THE TREATMENT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

At the meeting of the Sanitary Board yesterday afternoon (23rd inst.), a *grands* of the correspondence regarding a Hospital for the reception and treatment of cases of infectious disease was laid on the table. It had already been circulated amongst members, and the following minute by Dr. Canille was appended:—

"Concerning the Disposal of Infectious Persons.—Mr. McCallum's remarks concerning the disposal of infectious persons are sensible and apt. The same arguments come up time after time. *Is every sick infectious person to be sent to Hospital?*—Mr. McCallum's remarks help to convince one that such is not intended. Provided the infected person can be disposed of by having (a) either a separate floor, with a nurse, who shall have access only to the patient, all that is requisite is thereby attained; (b) or a separate room isolated from the house traffic with an attendant. *The Chinese will not go to the Hospital.*—Any medical practitioner in Hongkong, who has intimate dealings with Chinese sick, will know that this is a fanciful and untenable statement. I find less difficulty in persuading Chinese of the coolie class (male or female) to go to Hospital than I found amongst the lower classes in London and still less than amongst the labouring classes of the country throughout Britain. The numbers of Chinese who flock to the Allco Memorial Hospital, not only as out-patients but as in-patients, not only as free patients, but as paying patients, is surely a sufficient answer to such arguments. Again, the proportion of Chinese sick to the population who attend the Allco Memorial Hospital is slightly higher than the number which attend Hospital even in London, where the Hospital system is acknowledged to be abused. I hope that these statements will help to dispel the delusion which exists as to the Chinese not doing this and that, when wanted to, in sickness. And it is only natural that it should be so. They give up much less in the way of home comforts, especially in sickness, than do most Europeans of the lower classes. Many if not most of the coolie class in Hongkong are here only as immigrants, and therefore more likely to be persuaded to leave their dwelling as it is not generally their home. For all these reasons, without dealing with the question as a danger to the community, but simply as affecting the sick individual and his feelings and the possibility of getting him to go to Hospital, I believe that the often repeated statements as to the impossibility of getting the Chinese to be dealt with as the Board require are exaggerated.

"Hospital for Infectious Diseases.—The resumed consideration of a Hospital for infectious disease (capable of acting as an epidemic form) is a matter of great importance, and the Board as stated in the accompanying circular dated June 4th, 1889, are most interested. The Board's recommendation of a permanent building, with a skeleton framing, capable of speedy construction, seems to have been the deliberate conclusion and advice of the Board to the Government. Yet, instead, the Colony possesses a floating hospital, constructed without the knowledge or recommendation of the Board. In fact, the Board has no official information that such a place of reception for infected sick exists; and until the matter was inadvertently brought up by myself at the Board meeting, June, 1891, the fact of its existence was never mentioned as being in existence. No official statement was made as to its purpose; in fact, an opposite communication was conveyed and all attempts at opening the hospital made by myself were combated by the members of the Board then present. The expense was considered prohibitive by one member; the impossibility of getting patients, Chinese or European, to go there by other members, was advanced as arguments against its use. The question 'what was the *Hygeia* to be used for?' was shelved, my proposition could not find a second, and the Board at that meeting decided that it was a small-pox hospital or not, and whether or not it was infected, but by relying upon any help in that quarter. Unless the question is decidedly brought forward by some member of the Board, the existence of the *Hygeia* so far as the Board is concerned must remain in *tabula*. The further steps to be taken seem to me (unless the Board means to stultify its own actions), to ask the Government for a reply to the recommendation of the Board sent in June 4th, 1889. Should the Board receive a reply that the recommendations then put forward had not been acted upon, but that the *Hygeia* had been built instead, it is then for the Board to decide whether or not it is to be used as a floating hospital or not, and whether or not it is infected with the disease capable of attaining an epidemic form."

Another minute had been made by the Registrar-General as follows:—I reserve the remarks I have to make on this subject until it is brought up for discussion at the next meeting of the Board. Dr. Canille is not correct when he says that no official statement was made at the meeting held in June last as to the purpose for which the *Hygeia* is intended. A letter from the Colonial Secretary expressly stating its object was read. This letter should be produced when this question is again discussed."

A minute by the President was as follows:—The Executive report of the Local Government Board on the severe small-pox epidemic at Suifu in 1889 appears to demonstrate conclusively that a small-pox hospital in the centre of a town promotes the spread of the disease."

Dr. Canille said he should like to know from the Secretary whether the Board had any official information from the Government that the *Hygeia* was in existence. Were they supposed to be the possessor of it in their treatment of infectious disease? The letter received the other day seemed to him the first intimation that there was such a thing as the *Hygeia* in existence.

The Secretary said that beyond the letter from the Colonial Secretary read at a meeting of the Board a month ago he had received no information whatever.

The Registrar-General said that in the minute he had written on the *Hygeia* he expressly called attention to the fact that the letter referred to had been laid on the table, because Dr. Canille stated that the Board had no official information on the subject and that until he brought up the question at that meeting they had no official information. That was not quite the case. The Government had told them what the *Hygeia* was built for, and that letter was in possession of the Board; and was read, and referred to more than once.

Dr. Canille said he thought the letter from the Colonial Secretary must have been dragged out of the Government by the President's question. They did not get any nearer the truth at the meeting referred to as to what the *Hygeia* was built for, when it was to be opened, or who was to open it. They were told by the Colonial Surgeon, who was in charge of the *Hygeia*, that the expense was prohibitive—he did not think he exaggerated when he said he was led to understand the expense of opening the *Hygeia* was prohibitive. All they wanted to know as a Board was whether it was possible to have the *Hygeia* for the purposes of quarantine or for use in case of an epidemic. They were told it was intended for those purposes, but they were also told that it was so expensive that it was impossible to open it. But to open it for what? The term quarantine he supposed applied not only to passengers arriving by vessels but to persons affected with illness on shore. When an epidemic was threatened in Hongkong it was certainly consistent that the Board should have some means of dealing with the danger; they ought to be some station to which people affected with disease could be sent. In that sense he took quarantine to mean that they must quarantine people who were infected. Now the position that was taken with regard to the *Hygeia* at the meeting about a month ago was absolutely untenable. It was said in effect that it could not be opened for anything, that there was no key to this wonderful place, that it was too expensive. The business of the Board was to prevent epidemic, and if the *Hygeia* was not to be used for the purpose of preventing epidemic the sooner they took some other steps the better. Who would sit down and wait for an epidemic in these days? What they had to do was to prevent the epidemic. If the *Hygeia* was not available for that purpose they must adopt other measures. He did not believe the expense being so very great. It was true they were told that a man was taken to the embarkation of patients. Then it was said they would want a steam launch, but there was an easy way out of that; put the people on board a junk and tow the junk. A junk could be got for very little. Then it was said they must have people on board, but there were people on board now; some police. He thought the question of expense was put forward to cover up some other reason.

The Acting Captain Superintendent of Police Pardon me for correcting you as regards the police. There are no police on board.

The Registrar-General—Does Dr. Canille mean to infer that it is being used as a police hulk?

Dr. Canille said it was far from his purpose to say the ship was being used or misused; all he said was that there were police on board. He was only repeating what he was told by a man on board a few days ago. If these police could be maintained on board what more trouble or expense would it be to open for an epidemic hospital? Therefore with regard to expense, surely the Board would not allow that to come up again. It might be said they would have to have a doctor there. A doctor could visit once or twice, he did not know how necessary he should be resident there. Besides they had two doctors at the Civil Hospital, and when an epidemic of smallpox took place one of them would have to give up his time to that, and it would be no more hardship to him to attend the cases on board the *Hygeia* than elsewhere. It would not be right that he should be attending in the wards of the Civil Hospital at the same time in any case. There was no doubt the *Hygeia* was an admirable hospital for the purpose, and he thought that were the Sanitary Board asked to take into consideration whether it was a good and proper place for the placing of patients, and the Government had approved of it he did not think they could be staggered at the expense. There was the question of getting it in bad weather, but that was a difficulty that occurred only once or twice in a year, and he did not think that need detract from the value of the *Hygeia* as a hospital hulk. Having made these remarks he would be glad to be informed where he had gone wrong. He could see no reason why the ship should not be opened on the ground of expense, on the occurrence of any case which a medical man thought ought to be isolated.

The President said the question which Dr. Canille had mentioned was suggested by the smallpox cases which occurred during last winter. Very fortunately they were not numerous, but at one time they did seem of sufficient importance for the Board to consider the steps it would be necessary to take in case of an epidemic. There was the letter from the Colonial Secretary that the *Hygeia* was intended for use in case of epidemic; so far as official declaration went it would seem there would be no difficulty in using it in the way Dr. Canille recommended. Of course certain details would have to be arranged, but he agreed with Dr. Canille that there ought to be no difficulty in making whatever arrangements were necessary. He thought he might infer from what Dr. Canille had said that he considered the *Hygeia* a suitable place for the treatment of epidemic disease, whether cholera or smallpox.

Dr. Canille—Yes, that is my individual opinion, but I think we ought to be allowed as a Board to say whether we approve of the *Hygeia* or not.

The President—That being so, would you propose to address any further communication to the Colonial Secretary on the subject, or in the way you would suggest the question should be raised?

Dr. Canille said it seemed to him a slight had been cast on the Board. They were held responsible for the maintenance of the health of the public, or for the prevention of epidemics, and they were not asked a single question as to whether they approved of the *Hygeia* or not. But let that pass. He thought they ought to write back to the Government and say they were willing to accept it as an epidemic hospital. At the same time they must take notice of the words of the Colonial Surgeon when the matter was last discussed that the expense would be prohibitive. He need not repeat himself on that point, but he thought the way to bring the matter to a head would be to ask whether or not the hospital was available in case of threatened epidemic. It was opposed to the principle of the thing to say that when the people were dying at the rate of a hundred a week they would use this place. Were they not to use this place? Were they not to use it before, for the isolation of a few cases, in order to prevent an epidemic? They ought not to wait for a high death rate. Who had charge of the place? Had the Sanitary Board power over it or the Colonial Surgeon? He thought the Sanitary Board should have the power over the opening and closing. He thought they should write back to the Government and that the *Hygeia* should be under the direction of a Government official. He would move as a resolution that the Government be asked to hand over the control of the *Hygeia* to the Sanitary Board.

The Registrar-General said he had listened with very great interest to the remarks of Dr. Canille and he regretted that the Colonial Surgeon was not present, because it was chiefly the Colonial Surgeon's statement of the 18th June last that Dr. Canille had dealt with. But the question of expense was not the only thing brought up at that meeting; in fact there were so many things brought up that he thought the meeting took a little more time than was desirable. Some confusion as to whether they were dealing with epidemic cases or epidemics. Dr. Canille had said the isolation of a few cases was very important, but the question was who was to

decide that the epidemic was imminent? With regard to the *Hygeia*, he thought the Board had not been sufficiently consulted. The President of the correspondence showed that some years ago the Sanitary Board, after careful consideration, made certain definite recommendations to the Government, but they never got any reply until they were finally informed the *Hygeia* was built and ready. He thought the Board ought to receive more consideration at the hands of the Government. He thought the Board ought also to have been consulted as to whether the vessel should be used for quarantine as well as for an epidemic hospital. Dr. Canille had brought forward a motion to the effect that the *Hygeia* should be handed over to the control of the Board. He saw one difficulty in regard to this, and that was that the *Hygeia*, in addition to being intended for the purposes of an epidemic hospital was also intended as a quarantine station, and it was the Health Officer, who was not a member of the Board, who was responsible for moving people from ships to the quarantine station. Dr. Canille had also pointed out that the Chinese were not the prejudiced race of mortals they were represented to be. The statement he was sure would be grateful intelligence to many, and a surprise to not a few, and it was to be hoped that when an epidemic did come, they should find them as easily dealt with as Dr. Canille seemed to think they could be. But were any people in the colony who became infected to be removed whatever their surroundings might be? That could not be done. If a person occupied a house in which proper provision could be made for him there was no necessity or power to remove him at all; he could only be removed when there was no proper accommodation for him. He thought it would be well to remove the impression that people could be compulsorily removed in all cases. He knew that during his absence at home, when this subject was being discussed, there was a large apprehension that removal was to be compulsory, and the Chinese presented a numerous, signed petition praying that there might be no interference with their family life in the way of the compulsory removal of any member of the family, who became affected with infectious disease. There was one point which Dr. Canille had not touched upon in his speech at all, although he had in his minute, and that was the matter of an epidemic hospital on shore. Dr. Canille seemed to be of opinion that in addition to the floating hospital they should have some means of housing people on shore. Many proposals had been made, amongst others that of the Sanitary Board, of which the Government had taken no notice. If it were thought desirable to have an epidemic hospital on shore it could easily be arranged. Sites might be chosen at each end of the town (in order to do away with the necessity of patients being taken all through the town), and be levelled and so arranged that matches could be run up on them without delay. That was a matter that could be arranged at very slight expense and which would be very useful in the event of any outbreak such as had visited us in the past and might visit us in the future. The Sanitary Board formerly recommended iron stanchions for the framework, but seeing that they lived among a people whose inequalities in the world for the speedy manner in which they can run up structures of a durable nature, he thought they ought to utilize their skill in that direction instead of having iron stanchions. Seeing there was such a small attendance at the meeting and that this was a matter of some importance, he thought it would be only fair to the other members that the Board should not to-day come to any definite decision. He was sure Dr. Canille would not mind holding over the question to next meeting, when they might have some more discussion on it, though it might perhaps be thought they had had enough; but at any rate he thought they ought to give the Colonial Surgeon an opportunity of giving them his views on the subject, especially seeing comments had been made on what he had said on a previous occasion and he had not had an opportunity of replying. He therefore moved that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.

Dr. Canille seconded the motion, and in doing so said it must not be forgotten we had a quarantine house on Stone-cutters Island. This had apparently been lost sight of. It was a first-rate house. He believed it was now not available owing to the action of the military authorities, who said they could not have a quarantine station in the middle of a fort. Therefore this house was no longer available, and in its place we had got the *Hygeia*. He therefore thought they might regard the *Hygeia* as a quarantine station. Adopting that view he thought the suggestion of the Registrar-General was a good one, to have an epidemic hospital at each end of the town. It would not be necessary to have two doctors; one could attend to both, with good ward-masters in charge. The question could very well be left over to the next meeting; but he did not think what had been said was altogether wasted words, even though they had not quite agreed.

The President said he agreed that it was desirable to adjourn the consideration of the question to the next meeting, but there were one or two points to which he might refer. There was this difficulty in handing over the *Hygeia* to the Sanitary Board, that in case of an epidemic the Board had no medical officer or staff to place in charge of the patients. Again, although in case of emergency the *Hygeia* might be used to a certain extent both for epidemic and quarantine cases, it was clear to him that such an arrangement could not be satisfactory as a permanent one. Suppose an epidemic of smallpox and quarantine for cholera were to occur at the same time, the people to be quarantined would naturally object to being put in places occupied by yellow fever patients, or cholera patients, or smallpox patients. The suggestion thrown out by the Registrar-General seemed worthy of consideration, and he thought it probable some solution of the difficulty might be found on those lines, of a very moderate expense. Another thing that struck him with regard to the *Hygeia* was that in case of a very severe epidemic the hulk would not be large enough, whereas if arrangements were made for the erection of matches on large open spaces the accommodation might be increased as the demand arose.

The Acting Captain Superintendent of Police, in reply to Dr. Canille, said the Colonial Surgeon had charge of the *Hygeia*. The police were there for a very short time in case of an epidemic, in addition to cases taken provided by the Medical Department, but as soon as they received information the other day that the hulk would very likely be required for quarantine purposes on account of cholera at Swatow the police were removed.

It was then arranged that the matter should stand over. Dr. Canille's motion to press on the orders of the day for the next meeting.

THE SUNDAY LABOUR QUESTION.

The following is the petition against the Sunday Labour Ordinance, which has received 27 signatures, and was forwarded to the Secretary of State by the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Petition and Memorial of the undersigned, Respectfully sheweth, that on the 29th day of April last, a Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council

of Hongkong and read a first time a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the existing Ordinance relating to the loading and unloading of cargo on Sunday in the waters of the Colony."

The said Bill was introduced without the knowledge or sanction of the Executive Council of this Colony, without prior publication in the Hongkong Government Gazette or in any other paper, and without any previous notice or intimation to the public or to the members of Council that any legislation on the subject was about to be brought forward.

The first and only publication of the said Bill was in the Government Gazette of Saturday, the 2nd of May. The Government Gazette, although dated on the Saturday, is never in fact published until the Sunday morning, and is not in the hands of the public until Monday.

A meeting of Council was held on Tuesday, the 5th May, at which meeting the said Bill was read a second time, passed through Committee, read a third time and passed; the standing orders having been suspended to allow of this being done.

This meeting of Council was summoned with less than 24 hours' notice and no intimation was given to any members of any intention on the part of the Government to press the Bill to a third reading that day. Two of the members of Council, the senior unofficial member (the Honourable Phineas Rivie), and the representative of the Chamber of Commerce (the Honourable Thomas H. Whitehead), were unable to attend that meeting of Council, because of the shortness of the notice and because it was mail day.

Your petitioners complain that this Ordinance was introduced into and passed through Council in violation of Her Majesty's instructions and of the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Council and in defiance of all constitutional principle and precedent, no opportunity being given either to the public or to the unofficial members, or even to officials, members of the Executive Council, to consider or discuss the principle of the Bill or its details.

There was no necessity whatever for forcing the Bill through Council; no demand by any large section of the population for legislation on the subject; no crisis of any sort to be met, no reason why the Bill should not have been duly published, introduced, debated, and considered in the ordinary way.

There was, on the contrary, every reason why abundant time and the fullest publicity should have been given for the consideration of a measure so largely affecting the business of this port, especially when it is remembered that the Chambers of Commerce of this Colony and of Singapore, the Governors of Hongkong and of the Straits Settlements, and the Honourable Mr. Fleming, when administering this Government, had declared themselves unable to deal with this question and had advised your Lordship against legislation to control Sunday labour, and when it is remembered that your Lordship in view of place in Parliament had declared yourself obliged to occur in their opinions.

Your petitioners most respectfully submit that they are entitled on the above grounds to ask your Lordship to advise Her Majesty the Queen to advise the Ordinance in question, and if you should think legislation on the subject necessary or desirable, to direct the introduction into the Legislative Council of an amended Bill, with full notice to the public and to the members of the Council, after a careful examination of the conditions of trade here and with ample opportunity for discussion and examination.

THE SANITARY BOARD.

[illegible]

The Chinese squadron sailed from Yokohama on the morning of the 18th inst. for Corea.

The British cruiser *Porpoise* sailed from Yokohama on the 16th inst. for the Behring Sea.

The directors of the Hotel des Colonies, Ltd., at Shanghai, have declared an interim dividend of 3 per cent.

A fire took place at Fochow on the 18th inst. in a village close the Race-course, and seven houses were destroyed.

The Olympia Skating Rink at Shanghai is being conducted with great energy, and new attractions are constantly provided. On Saturday last there was a two-mile race for \$10.

Comparing the depth of water on the Wooning Bay on the same days of the moon, it is stated that there is less water this year than there was last. The outer bar is also silted up.

The *Peking Gazette* of 14th July states that Sun-fan, a Manchou, lately Provincial Treasurer of Szechuan, has been appointed Governor of Kueichow. He is succeeded in Szechuan by Kung Chao-yuan, lately Taoist of Shanghai.

The Customs' Revenue cruiser *Pingchow* left Shanghai on the 23rd for the Hainan Sea, and had on the board the Commissioner of Customs, the Const Inspector, and the Engineer-in-Chief. It is presumed that it is the intention of the Customs to put up a light on the Hainan.

According to the *Echo* there is a fresh epidemic of sickness amongst the natives at Fochow, which notwithstanding the carrying off of the tallies during the past week was so far powerless to remove. On this occasion the sickness arises from eating unripe fruit. The mortality in several of the shops in the near neighbourhood has been considerable this week.

We hear that after the recent typhoon over fifty junk-people were rescued by two Chinese Customs cruisers near Foh-tai-chai, in the Ly-ré-mun Pass, a considerable number being drowned. During the storm a disabled junk, that was drifting down the Pass was boarded by the crew of another junk, who, instead of rendering help, stripped the helpless craft and cleared out.

At the Magistracy yesterday an inquiry was held as to the death of a Chinese woman in Peel Street on Sunday. She had lost all her money pawning, and ended her troubles with opium. A verdict of suicide was returned. An inquiry was also held as to the death of a Chinaman who jumped from the first floor of a house in Queen's Road when he heard the next house falling. Verdict—death from concussion of the brain.

HAVEN be praised, for we are to have pure tea at last—tea guaranteed to be free from adulteration. We learn from native sources that the Kueichow Prefect has issued a proclamation, saying that he has recently heard that a great number of the women and girls employed by the Kueichow tea-merchants this season for picking tea are bad characters, who carry on intrigues with the young men of the place. The Prefect gives warning that any such practices are brought under his notice the parties concerned will be severely punished, and he cautions the tea-merchants to be more careful in the selection of their pickers for the future.

H.M.S. *Tweed*, it is expected, will be raised safely at next spring tide; everything is in readiness. It appears that an unknown rock, which was in the way of floating her from the perilous position where she stranded, was the cause of the second disaster, and it tipped another hole in her. It is to be hoped the Naval authorities, backed by the Government of the colony, will see their way to let the *Tweed* and *Towhee* remain in future as guardships off Shomcon. These vessels then will prove of service which they never can lyne here or elsewhere. They will be available at a few hours notice when wanted, and will be all along in an efficient state through continuously in fresh water, which will preserve their hulls, whilst at the same time any risk they run in the Canton river is reduced to a minimum.

CAPTAIN E. A. Barnett, Commandant, who has recently returned to Sandakan, has supplied the *Herald* with an account of a trip to the head of the Padas River. Captain Barnett left Labuan on April 22nd, arrived at Sungai Rayo May 1st, and started for the Katapok country arriving there on May 15th, the force under Captain Barnett's orders numbering thirty-four non-commissioned officers and, also some 70 Dyak auxiliaries, eight of whom were armed with muzzle-loading guns. The first night on arrival Captain Barnett's party were attacked, and two carriers—baggage coolies—were wounded. Next morning the Katapoks were met in force, but they were not so much to come to close quarters, being content with firing at long range. The Constabulary carried a hill and occupied a long house 150 yards long. After heavy firing the enemy were driven from the hill, and Dyaks being badly wounded in the leg. The enemy kept up a desultory fire upon the house to which our men did not reply except by firing at exposed positions, but showed a white flag at 2 p.m. Captain Barnett went out with Messrs. Wheatley and Wise, escorted by a long palaver ensued, the enemy gradually retiring and opening fire, which they could not understand why the police did not return their fire. The interpreter as a rule said our men were short of ammunition. After collecting all the booty, jars, guns, etc., Captain Barnett decided to return on May 20th. On the morning of that day the enemy were outflanked and taken by surprise, and retreated along the whole line. Captain Barnett and party got back to Sapong on June 1st. The casualties on our side were three men wounded by bullets, and one disabled by a fall. The enemy are all armed with firearms, are numerous, and apparently have plenty of ammunition.

THE SUNDAY REST BILL'S SUPPORTERS.

WHY THEY DIDN'T SIGN THE PETITION.

Having in our last issue given the opinions of the signatories to the petition against the Sunday Cargoworking Ordinance, we now give a few reasons advanced by supporters of the Bill for refusing to sign.

Mr. Osborne, Secretary of the Kowloon Wharf and Godown Company, said:—Our Company permanently employ about 40 coolies who are paid by the month. It is therefore apparently to our benefit to have the Ordinance repealed, so that they can work seven days a week. But I find that when they work constantly from morning till night, and sometimes late into the night, they are fagged; we can get as much work, or more, out of them by giving them a day's rest every week. Our European staff have never had a rest on a Sunday at all; hitherto, and they, and all the captains and officers, I have seen to on the subject, are bitterly in favor of the Ordinance. My experience is that all this talk about the half-holiday movement is a mere humbug. I have seen on Sundays as much as most men in Hongkong, and I prefer a day's rest, and I believe in others having one as

well. Even before this measure was introduced we allowed the European employees to cease work at noon on Sundays, whenever I could, to let them recuperate. I don't think any firm is more interested in the matter than our Company, as far as ocean steamers are concerned, and we entirely agree with the Ordinance.

Our representative then called on one or two other who had refused to sign, but was unable to gather any expression of opinion from them. He then visited several of the Indian coolies who were understood to have signed both the petition for Sunday Rest and the recent one against it.

Mr. R. (Shewan) of Shewan and Co., agents for the China and Manila Steamship Company, hadn't time to give any reasons except that he was not in favor of Sunday labour.

Mr. Montague Bear, shipping clerk in Butterfield and Swire's, was next interviewed. He admitted that he had signed Sunday labour in the harbor. The last one I admit that I didn't sign, but I was assured by Mr. E. C. Ryan, who was in charge of it, that its only object was to get the operation of the Bill postponed for two months, and reconsidered, as in its present form, and as rushed through Council, it requires revision. I understand that it embodies the principle of Mr. Goldsmith's petition, with some slight modifications. The Ordinance, at present, restricts the right of a few men to work on a Sunday, and I don't hold with that—no principle should be made universal or not touched at all. This idea that seems to prevail that any shipping clerks have been coerced into signing, is all humbug. I work on a Sunday myself. I would as soon work on that day as on a Monday, or a Friday, because I only work at any one day, from pure necessity. If you stop ships' officers from working on Sundays why not stop everybody? I object to this partial legislation. It doesn't matter to our firm, as agents, but we object to it, on principle.

Another employee in the same house, also a signatory of both petitions (who at the last moment, "on second thoughts," declined to allow his name to be published) said:—I signed Mr. Goldsmith's petition because I agreed with the principle of not forcing men to work on Sundays, but I signed the last petition because I objected to the form of legislation. If people are obliged to work why stop them by law? Why stop people from working over-time? It will be, especially hard on German ships' officers. A circular was sent round among the leading shipping firms some time ago, with a view to their agreeing to make Sunday labour among the officers optional, but the agents of the Indo-China S. N. Co. refused to sign, and it fell through.

Mr. J. J. Kewick, of Jardine Matheson & Co., said:—I never had any idea of signing. I have all along been in favor of the Ordinance, but the present form, although your paper and others said that when the deputation from the Mercantile Marine Officers' Association intervened at the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce last year I was very much opposed to the views expressed by Capt. Ashton. As a matter of fact I was in complete accord with them, but I tried to elicit some information, and could not. When the question came before the Council, after long debate among the general public, the only difficulty I felt was as to making the Bill fair and practicable. In my opinion that has been done, and any hardship obviated. It seems to me that if the principle of granting permits for Sunday labour is practicable in Treaty ports it is perfectly practicable here. That is my opinion individually, and as a shipping agent. I don't separate the two things. The only question that can possibly arise is whether the cost of the permit, as fixed by the Ordinance, is reasonable or not. If it is not, it is the opponents of the Bill should make a fair tariff; if it is I see no further ground for complaint on their part. I think it is decidedly reasonable. As to the statement that this firm ever refused to co-operate with the other shipping firms in making Sunday labour optional, all I know is that during my absence some such memorandum was circulated, and sent back until my return. It was never submitted again. As a matter of fact, after the conference between the Officers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Commerce we made preparations to carry out such an arrangement, as far as the officers in the Indo-China boats were concerned—indeed they have always been free to work or not on Sundays, as they liked. The wonder to me is how such a petition as this just sent home was signed by even the few who did.

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Mr. Montague Bear, shipping clerk in Butterfield and Swire's, was next interviewed. He admitted that he had signed Sunday labour in the harbor. The last one I admit that I didn't sign, but I was assured by Mr. E. C. Ryan, who was in charge of it, that its only object was to get the operation of the Bill postponed for two months, and reconsidered, as in its present form, and as rushed through Council, it requires revision. I understand that it embodies the principle of Mr. Goldsmith's petition, with some slight modifications. The Ordinance, at present, restricts the right of a few men to work on a Sunday, and I don't hold with that—no principle should be made universal or not touched at all. This idea that seems to prevail that any shipping clerks have been coerced into signing, is all humbug. I work on a Sunday myself. I would as soon work on that day as on a Monday, or a Friday, because I only work at any one day, from pure necessity. If you stop ships' officers from working on Sundays why not stop everybody? I object to this partial legislation. It doesn't matter to our firm, as agents, but we object to it, on principle.

Another employee in the same house, also a signatory of both petitions (who at the last moment, "on second thoughts," declined to allow his name to be published) said:—I signed Mr. Goldsmith's petition because I agreed with the principle of not forcing men to work on Sundays, but I signed the last petition because I objected to the form of legislation. If people are obliged to work why stop them by law? Why stop people from working over-time? It will be, especially hard on German ships' officers. A circular was sent round among the leading shipping firms some time ago, with a view to their agreeing to make Sunday labour among the officers optional, but the agents of the Indo-China S. N. Co. refused to sign, and it fell through.

Mr. J. J. Kewick, of Jardine Matheson & Co., said:—I never had any idea of signing. I have all along been in favor of the Ordinance, but the present form, although your paper and others said that when the deputation from the Mercantile Marine Officers' Association intervened at the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce last year I was very much opposed to the views expressed by Capt. Ashton. As a matter of fact I was in complete accord with them, but I tried to elicit some information, and could not. When the question came before the Council, after long debate among the general public, the only difficulty I felt was as to making the Bill fair and practicable. In my opinion that has been done, and any hardship obviated. It seems to me that if the principle of granting permits for Sunday labour is practicable in Treaty ports it is perfectly practicable here. That is my opinion individually, and as a shipping agent. I don't separate the two things. The only question that can possibly arise is whether the cost of the permit, as fixed by the Ordinance, is reasonable or not. If it is not, it is the opponents of the Bill should make a fair tariff; if it is I see no further ground for complaint on their part. I think it is decidedly reasonable. As to the statement that this firm ever refused to co-operate with the other shipping firms in making Sunday labour optional, all I know is that during my absence some such memorandum was circulated, and sent back until my return. It was never submitted again. As a matter of fact, after the conference between the Officers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Commerce we made preparations to carry out such an arrangement, as far as the officers in the Indo-China boats were concerned—indeed they have always been free to work or not on Sundays, as they liked. The wonder to me is how such a petition as this just sent home was signed by even the few who did.

Mr. E. L. Woodie, agent of the P. and O. mail steamers, said:—I signed the petition, but did not do so in the name of the Company altogether, though I don't think our directors are very pleased with the Ordinance. It is undoubtedly very hard on mail steamers, because they are not permitted to make a Sunday call at any of the ports. I don't think legislation was at all required—no never work the ships on Sunday unless it is absolutely necessary, and it is a matter that should be left to the discretion of the shipowners. Our vessels cannot stay here more than 24 hours, and it is to the public interest that there should be no delay. I don't see that the exemption of mail steamers from the operation of the Ordinance would handicap them as regards ordinary cargo-boats; they can't take in much cargo during their short stay. I suppose we should have to take out permits, some time when they were not required, though the General Manager is constantly about refunding the cost of unneeded permits. We have a fortnightly service, and our last three boats from home have all been here on a Sunday—the next will be well, probably. Yes, the officers had to work on the Sunday; it is part of their service.

Mr. Andrew Johnston, a leading engineer, gave a little interesting information as to the effect of the Bill as regarded the members of his profession. He said:—The engineers get their Sunday off at present as a rule. Certainly there are often repairs to do when in port, but if they are serious they are done at the Dock, and they don't work on Sunday except in case of urgent or important they are usually left over Sunday. But the engineers are in favor of the Ordinance, to a man.

Messrs. Lane and Crawford's representative said that he refused to sign the petition, but he wouldn't say why.

Carmichael & Co. also refused to sign, and gave their reasons. They didn't believe in Sunday labour because "they'd been there themselves."

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CORRESPONDENCE.

(We do not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by Correspondents in this column.)

THE COOLIES AND SUNDAY WORK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HONGKONG TELEGRAPH." Sir, It may be of interest to you to know what a very competent authority wrote to me as far back as 1888 on the above subject. My correspondent said:—

"The wages of cargo-coolies in this colony average from \$3 to \$4 per month, the employers, in addition, providing 'chow-chow' and 'samah' in Swatow and Amoy. The wages average a trifle lower than these figures. The men are not of 'free-work,' and it is hardly possible to get them to work for less than the rate of the half-holiday movement. The 'free-work' of a day's rest is a mere humbug, and I have seen on Sundays as much as most men in Hongkong, and I prefer a day's rest, and I believe in others having one as

well. Even before this measure was introduced we allowed the European employees to cease work at noon on Sundays, whenever I could, to let them recuperate. I don't think any firm is more interested in the matter than our Company, as far as ocean steamers are concerned, and we entirely agree with the Ordinance.

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